

REMARKS

Applicants traverse the withdrawal of claims 8-10, 23, 24, and 31 as not being drawn to the elected Species A. Species A was set forth as Figure 1, and Figure 1 includes splice tray 48. Applicants respectfully submit that splice tray 48 and connector ports 46 are both interconnection means. Therefore, Applicants request that claims 8-10, 23, 24, and 31 be examined. Note the Office Action rejected claims 8 and 10. Additionally, Applicants traverse the assertion that claims 5-9 are withdrawn. Rather claim 7 is in the elected Species A per the Office Action, and Applicants submit that claims 8-10 are also in the elected Species A. Applicants hereby affirm the provisional election of Species A.

Claims 1-31 are presently pending. Claims 1-4, 7-12, 17-21, 23-24, 28-29, and 31 should be the claims being examined. Claims 5-6, 13-16, 22, 25-27, and 30 should be the withdrawn claims. Currently claims 1-4, 7, 11, 12, 17-21, 28, and 29 are rejected in the Office Action Summary, and claims 1-4, 8, 10-12, 17-21, 28, and 29 are rejected in the detailed action. Clarification is requested. Applicants are responding herein to the detailed action.

Pursuant to paragraph 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 8, 10-12, 17-21, 28, and 29 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over O'Neil et al. (U.S. patent 5,218,664) in view of Battey et al. (U.S. published application 2002/0051616A1).

Claim 1 recites *inter alia* "a plate secured to one of the housing and the base and operable for separating the interior cavity into a first compartment and a second compartment". Neither O'Neil et al. or Battey et al. suggest or describe "a plate secured to one of the housing and the base and operable for separating the interior cavity into a first compartment and a second

compartment". Applicants traverse the assertion in the Office Action that "O'Neil teaches...a plate 25 secured to one of the housing and the base and operable for separating the interior cavity into a first compartment 21 and a second compartment (...explained in col. 2, lines 52-57)".

Reference numeral 25 is described by O'Neil as a surface of end cap 12, and col. 2, lines 52-57 recite *inter alia* that a "vessel 21 will be filled up to surface 25 with an encapsulant which is a gel preventing access of water to splice tray 24". Therefore it is not clear that surface 25 is secured to one of the housing and the base and operable for separating the interior cavity into a first compartment and a second compartment. Accordingly, claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over the cited art. Claims 17 and 28 include the same language and are also submitted to be patentable over the cited art. Claims 2-4, 11-12, 18-21, and 29 all depend from patentable base claims and are submitted to patentable over the cited art.

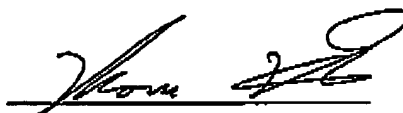
For at least the above reasons Applicants request that the 103 rejection of claims 1-4, 8, 10-12, 17-21, 28, and 29 be withdrawn.

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A one month extension is hereby requested to extend the due date from December 21, 2005 up to and including January 21, 2006. Please charge the fee to Deposit Account No. 19-2167.

This response does not present new claims for consideration. Accordingly, no fee for excess independent or total claims is due. The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any fee due in connection with the filing of this paper, including any fee for excess independent or total claims or any fee or an extension of time not previously accounted for, to Deposit Account No. 19-2167.

Respectfully submitted,



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